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PAGES FROM A CRAZY MAN'S LIFE.

(KSHEPAR JHULI)

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Shri Shri Ma Anandamayee Ashram
BANARAS

BY—

SRI SITARAMDAS OMKARNATH
(RAMASHRAM)

Translated by—

S. SIL.

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SRI SITARAM DAS OMKARNATH
(RAMASHRAM)

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH
—BY—
S. SIL.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

The Saint of Ramashram has produced a work of art which is here translated into English and offered to the growing circle of his devotees outside Bengal.

Sri Sitaramdas Omkarnath is shedding his lustre over a widening radius, and his life is a living message to whoever seeks, amid life's degrading reality, a way out of Darkness.

The Saint-author has a way of teaching great things in a remarkably simple way, and his teachings drive home through a chain of dialogues.

Those who love religious stories will find themselves enjoying reading this book, and, God willing, they will be drawn into the spiritual lore exhibited in its pages.

The Saint of Ramashram has not run away from life. He comes boldly up to life, and offers a message which is as deep as life itself.

November, 1950. S. SIL.

DEDICATION.

O Lord Krishna, you are in the Shrine of my heart and from that seat you prompted the thoughts that fill the pages of this book. And so to you, O joyous and ecstatic Lord, I dedicate what You Yourself gave me in grace

Ramashram,
Dumurdaha.
9-11-1352.

I am,
Yours, as ever,
SITARAMDAS.

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SHREE SHREE SITARAMDAS OMKARNATH

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LOVE AND LUCRE

CRAZY MAN: Oh, the darkness! Where do you bring me, Lord? It stifles my breath. Desert me not, for I am thine. What? Sayest thou that I need have no fear? Then let me open my eyes. O, how lovely are the sights around me! How fine are the trees with their flowers, and their foliage! What music comes from the birds in the groves! Here, too, there is the earth and water and the skies! Here, too, the rising sun puts crimson touches on the eastern sky. And the moon shines here, too, upon the homes and the faces. What soothing moonlight brightens the night! Let me walk along this road. Who is that coming this way? He mutters. Hello, where does the road lead to?

Stranger: Money is the end of all pursuits. Money carries words into deeds. It gives religion a meaning. And without it, one is bound to be ignored by parents and wife and children and friends.

Crazy Man: Hello, friend, whither runs this road?

Stranger: Money is peace. Money is bliss. The pauper should prefer death. Money must come, whatever the means. What I want is money, no matter how it comes.

Crazy man : Ay, must he be mad ? He is too full of money to answer me. Oh, there comes another man. Tell me, O, if you please, where this road leads to.

Second Man : I bow to him who gives money, whatever his caste. A rich man passes for a god You can't pay your way without money. Lucky is he who earns money whatever his calling. If you want to prove your worth, begin to earn. Money is the thing.

Crazy man : This man too won't hear me. He is sunk in thoughts of gold. There comes a Brahman in the trappings of a true Brahman. He mutters. He must be repeating the holy names of God. Oh' no, he thinks loudly of money and gold.

Brahman : Power comes from gold, and learning too. As the summer dries up the small lake, poverty dries up the functions of a small mind. The Shastras came from big men who could not err. The rich man rallies a host of friends, and when he laughs he showers pearls, and never does he weep without shedding gems. Within his reach are the four desiderata : Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. As appeasement follows dinner, peace follows the bags of gold. I am a Brahman, but I must serve to earn and who says that we must not be servitors ? We must earn by honest service or dishonest, by fraud or forgery, by lying or cheating. That is my principle of life. Think of gold, dream of gold.

Crazy man : O, what a world ! Every one chants "Lucre, Lucre." Have they all lost their senses ? And lo ! here comes a Sadhu and how fine are his bearings ! He is in Gairik attire and he carries a brass-pot as he should. And he is telling the beads. Good gracious ! He too chants-Money, money.

Sadhu : Money must come, not for me but for the Sadhus and Vaishnavas who come to my door. Here is all that I own, I have renounced the world. All that I may want now must inevitably be for others. I will start upon a pilgrimage, and money is needed.

Crazy man : O God, the Sadhu did not care to look at me. He cried for gold and he passed. Where have you brought me, Lord ? But I hear the cymbals ringing. There they come—The Hari Kirtan Party ! O what luck ! They all chant the hymn of gold! The air is ringing with their cries for gold.

Gold and Silver, gold and silver
Song
Chant it loud and chant it long.

Crazy man: What a world! A thousand voices sing of money like one man. They are mad for money and they rush with a passion. And I am a lone sardonic spectator. Who is mad? They or I myself? O, help me, God!

A Voice "All this is a dream. Hold your peace."

Crazy man: A dream! What I see before me this morning is an illusion? Let me then take another road. There comes a comely youth. How far, my friend, is the village?

Youth: Man is born to make merry. If one were not to revel in wine and women, one had better be a beast or a bird. If we are born as men let us join the revelry of wine and women and music, and prove our worth as men

Crazy man: O God, he sounds a new note! And he is too full of all that to heed my query. But a man of forty comes along. Please, Sir, which is the way to the village?

LOVE AND LUCRE

Man of forty : Woman is the queen the world over. If one can please a woman, one is worth the salt. Parents will die one of these days. Why wait upon them ? Serve your wife and save your soul. Don't burn incense at the old and dingy shrines. Woman is the living image. Bow to her in reverence. It is not for her to ply her limbs in the service of deities. It is not for her to slave night and day in the service of your guests. It is for you to minister to her comforts. Please the ladies, and you please the world. Ladies, ladies, O my ladies.

Crazy man : This man is full of ladies. Where can I go now ? There comes a Brahman Pandit, but I cannot trust his bearings. However let me ask. Hello, Sir, how far is the village ?

Brahman : It won't do to be scrupulous about kinship. What is meant to be enjoyed must be enjoyed. Death may come you know not when. Bury your scruples and make merry. If you are to sink into meditation, lose yourself in thoughts of women. Rotate the word "My sweetest" as long as you can. Throw your flowers at the feet of a woman. If you seek servitude, serve a woman.

Crazy man : O the Brahman talked glibly about women and passed along. What a hot spot for me !

PAGES FROM A CRAZYMAN'S LIFE.

Every one, young or old, is caught in the craze for women. Is this the old holy land of ascetics ? Help me, God. I seek your protection. Tell me, Lord, if it is a dream or a reality.

A Voice : Wake up from your sleep and your nightmare shall pass.

Crazy man : O then, this is another dream ! Save me, God. Let me rest here. Is not that a woman coming ? What says the woman ?

Woman : Man is a puppet in my hands. And he must behave as I like him to We are women and nothing in the world can stop us. There is no law to govern our impulses. We are supreme. And men must render unto us what is ours. They are to serve and ours is the privilege to be served. We must rid our homes of relatives and yoke our husbands to our service. Thus serving they shall wait upon our lips and our smiles.

Crazy man : O what rages and what passions fill the air ! Human mind is after carnal pleasures. And even the objects of insensate Nature seem to be instinct with a vulgar and degrading animation. The waves of the rivers lash the shores and say "Enjoy, enjoy." Was man made for this ?

Slumber steals over me. And I feel I am getting back to childhood. Who are you waiting there to suckle me like a baby ?

A Voice : I am, my darling, your mother. Suck, baby, suck.

Crazy man : How can you be my mother ? I have just come to this land. Things here are out of joint. Discord prevails. I have a faint remembrance of someone who was very dear to me. I played on his bosom like a drop of water on the sea. O, how sleepy I feel. My eyes are heavy with slumber. Who are you smiling ?

A Voice : I am your father.

Crazy man : Father—mother—O, my memory fails me. What was it ? Some one was very dear to me and I rested on his bosom. Now please tell me, O my parents, what I am to do.

Parents : You must read and learn. You must serve your parents. And you must earn money.

Crazy man : Is that so ? Where is he that was so dear to me ? Slumber steals over me. And who are you please ?

A voice : I am your wife.

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A voice : I am your wife.

PAGES FROM A CRAZYMAN'S LIFE.

Crazy man: O, the old memory, but it fades! Some one was dear to me, and where is he? I face quite new faces. Tell me, O, what I am to do.

A voice: I am your wife. You have to maintain me. You must look after me. You must earn and be happy.

Crazy man: O, my parents and my wife speak of earning. But I remember faintly a land of bliss, and what a lovely land it was! I was there with him and he loved me dearly. I was lost in bliss. How sleepy I feel! Who are you all, please?

Crowd: We are your children and your friends and relatives. We count upon your support. We are your incumbents. It won't do to be indifferent. Earn money and look after us.

Crazy man: I see before me a host of people. And they look to me for support. Must I earn? O, then I must, But where is he so dear to me? He loved me so dearly. He was within me and without me. But O, the wife has become a snake and comes hissing. O, the deadly bite! Where are you, my parents and friends? O heavens, I am done for. They have all turned into snakes and they come hissing. O, the deadly poison!

LOVE AND LUCRE

Save me, God, save me. I am dying. O, the fury of the ocean sea!

A voice: Hari Om! Hari Om! Hari Om! Hallo my crazy son, why do you fear? It is I who come before you in horrid shapes. Fear me not.

Crazy man: O, you have come at last! These then are all your images? Then let me say, Hari Om! Hari Om! Hari Om!

Voice: You are dancing, my crazy child?

Crazy man: O why not? Now that you have appeared as cosmic resonance, I feel the surge of a new thrill coursing through my entire frame and my blood is bubbling over. I am wholly engulfed in a celestial ebullition, Hari Om, Hari Om! You come before me as my wife and children and parents? What magic is thine, O Lord.

Voice: You are overwhelmed, are you? Hari Om, Hari Om!

Crazy man: What varied forms you assume, my Lord? How could I know they were all you? What a nightmare it was to face a host of horrid shapes! It was all your sport, my Lord, but it was almost death to me. So many forms do you assume! You can become a motley crowd of men and women and birds and beasts, and you play your giant game. O, if I could know it before!

Voice: All you see is Me. Those who come here and get into sleep are apt to be frightened by a phantom show. Those who keep awake see only the divine reality—the one entity—the immanent Being.

Crazy man: But slumber comes, howsoever I may try to keep it off.

Voice: Keep on chanting "Hari Om, Hari Om" and chant it loud, and let there be no break in your effort. Slumber then will not steal over you, but will steal away from you sheepishly. Chant your mantra "Hari Om, Hari Om" and the echoes of your cry will roll over the slumbering millions and knock them out of slumber. And then there will be a giant chorus of "Hari Om, Hari Om," and the earth and the sky will resound with its echoes. Horrors may come before you, but they will cease to be horrible if you hold fast to me.

Crazy man: Horrors are phantoms, yes. For there is only you and me! Hari Om, Hari Om, Jai Guru, Hari Om.

THE SHOWER-BATH.

The Crazy man sang in his cottage, "Sitaram, what a fine shower for me!" He was clapping his hands as he sang, when Haladhar came up and said "Where is your water?"

Crazy Man: Sitaram, this water, invisible to the coarse eye, comes straight from the lotus-feet of Sri Hari and goes through the body and sweeps it clean of all filth.

Haladhar: Does it wash the body-filth, too?

Crazy man: Yes, why not?

Alinila Ghanasyamam Nalinayatalochanam
***S*marami Satchidanandam**
Tena Snato Bhabamyaham

Haladhar: Please explain in Bengali.

Crazy man: I contemplate the deep blue image of the eternally conscious and joyous Sri Hari, and I am washed in the process.

Haladhar: Please be more explicit.

Crazy man: He exists, He shines and He is held dear. And yet He is above all forms and names. And the blue sky is His eye and He looks on me and I get the shower. And what a shower! [He weeps]

Haladhar: Said you not that your bathing water is invisible? But there it is—rolling down your cheeks!

Crazy man: Sitaram, Sitaram.

Haladhar: Tell me, O what is internal filth and what is external.

Crazy man: The five elements have gone into the making of the material body and every inch of it is filthy. The mind and wit and the senses make up the supra-physical ego and that is internal filth. And then there is the supra-mental ego which is also called internal filth. All filth must go.

Haladhar: How to proceed after the filth is gone?

THE SHOWER—BATH

Crazy man :

Achyutoham Anantoham Anandoham Hari
Nityoham Nirbikalpoham
Nirakarosmi Aham Sada
Satchidanandarupoham Ajoham
Amritosmi Aham
Brahmaibaham Na Samsari
Muktoham Iti Bhabayet.

I have to think that I am changeless, I am infinite, I am without form and without decay, I am eternally conscious and joyous and blissful, and I am beyond birth and death.

Haladhar : All that is difficult of comprehension. I can ply my tongue and say "Rama, Rama", but I cannot think of abstruse subtleties.

Crazy man : Yes, but my Lord says that, comprehension failing, you have merely to articulate "I am changeless, I am infinite" and so on, and when you have put in a year of such effort you are emancipated.

Haladhar : I cannot see how I shall be emancipated that way.

PAGES FROM A CRAZYMAN'S LIFE.

Crazy man: The words on your tongue are potent and divine and they ride the upward current of your soul. The ego is stupefied by the mighty spell of Sri Hari's names. The words themselves drag you into the current and you are helpless.

Haladhar: Then must I be caught in the tide? What then?

Crazy man: Inside the heart there is a vacuum named Trikut. And when the wind of life is frozen there, only Kumbhak remains. And the mind finally merges in the lotus-feet of Vishnu. You see how you are emancipated?

Haladhar: You seem to be trying to put a round peg in a square hole. Yogatarabali prescribes the three courses of Uddiyan, Jalandhar and Mulabandha, and you must go through all of them before you can awaken Kundalini—the divine energy in you. But you seem to say entirely new things.

Crazy man: O, this Kundalini wakes up in the end, whichever road you take to reach the end. She is in the image you cultivate in Mantrayoga. She is in the Point at which Self vanishes in Layayoga. The radiance of Hotayoga is not without her. And again, thank God, she wakes up if you keep saying

"Rama Rama" or if you cry like a boy and say "Wake up, mother, sleep no more." Once she rises from her somnolence, it is plain-sailing for you.

Haladhar: But the gulf yawns between a small fry like me and the omnipotent Lord of all we see. O, where is my wealth, and where is my mastery and where is my omniscience? I am a destitute and yet if I say "I am Brahma", won't I be dismissed as an insane babbler? If God is the sun, I am a mere ray. If He is the ocean, I am a mere ripple in the ocean.

Crazy man: Must you insist that the sun beam is not the sun, and the ripple is not the sea? Where did the ripple and the beam come from? Where will they finally go?

Haladhar; The sun beam belongs to the sun and will merge in the sun. The ripple belongs to the sea and will merge in the sea.

Crazy man: What harm, then, if the ripple thinks it is the sea itself? There is no way out for it except the bosom of the sea. When the mind merges into the source wherefrom it emerged, nothing remains but a vastness, infinite and indivisible. Know you what happened to the Gopikas?

When Lord Krishna disappeared from Rasmandal, they looked about for Him and lost themselves in Him. And unto each of them came the overpowering thought—the blissful sense of identity—"I am Krishna." Prahlad sank in his thoughts of God and what happened ?

Bisasmara Tathatmanam
Nanyat Kinchidajanata
Ahamebabyayonanta Paramatmeti Achintayat.

He lost his sense of self-existence and identified himself with the changeless and eternal Soul. I am not here speaking of the illusionist seekers of the Absolute Soul. I speak of those who accept the world and seek God through devotion. King Kansa thought and thought of Krishna until he saw the immanent presence of Krishna pervading the earth and the sky. Salwa pressed deeper and deeper into thoughts of Basudeva until he became Basudeva Himself. Must you worship your deity ? Then be yourself the deity.

'Devo Bhutwa Devam Jajet.'

The central note that rings through Tantrik worship is an equation of the individual ego to the Universal Soul. You must cultivate, whatever your road, the notion that you are the conscious Soul and not the material mass of flesh and blood. You are severed as Jiva-Self from the Universal and so long as that Severance continues, must you ply yourself in your Sadhana, for the goal you seek is the attainment of Godhood.

Haladhar: No, I don't want to be Siva, I want Siva. I am His servant and devotee.

Crazy man: Yes, you may in all earnest cultivate that Relation, but that also will eventually work itself, God knows how, into a blissful realisation of your identity with Siva. But a mere intellectual acceptance of the identity carries you nowhere You must press yourself deep into Sadhana before you emerge into the dawn of Realisation.

Haladhar: It is always difficult for me to comprehend the illusionism of the Gnanayogis. And to me it is far from enlivening.

Crazy man: Why bother about all that? Do please lay yourself down at His feet and say "I seek thy protection, O Lord." Sitaram, Sitaram!

Haladhar: Sadhana is not for me. I can't think of a month of systematic effort. Troubles come and proverty pinches. Give me, O, a very simple prescription and let me try it.

Crazy man : Have you had your initiation (Diksha) ?

Haladhar : Yes, my friend.

Crazy man : Then hold on to your 'Mantra' ! When you are thrown off your balance, chant aloud the name of God. And when you calm down, tell your mantra, and contemplate the Leela of the Lord. Hinge all your energy around His Name and His Leela, for the Lord Himself has said that you reach Him quicker that way. It is indeed the Golden Way.

Haladhar : You seem to prescribe a non-stop recital of "Rama, Rama." Will that carry me to Bliss ?

Crazy man :

Japata Sarba Vedanscha
Sarbamantran Cha Parbati
Tasmat Kotigunam Punyam
Ram Nam Naiba Lavyatay
Pranaprayana Samaye Ramanama
Sakrit Smaret
Sa Vitwa Mandalam Vano
Param Dhamavi Gachchhati.

THE SHOWER—BATH

Siva said, "O Parbati, the name of Rama is infinitely more fruitful of good than all the Vedas and mantras put together. He who once recalls the name of Rama in his death-bed sails through the solar world and lands in the land of Bliss."

Haladhar: Sri Rama, Rama, Rama, Sitaram, Sitaram.

Crazy man: Keep it repeating on your tongue and you shall in time lose yourself. The Lord comes on softly, and you feel His sweet embrace and get lost in ecstasy. You are then no more your distinct self; you are one with the Lord. Our beloved Lord Chaitanya chanted "Krishna—Krishna" and broke into ejaculations of "I am He. I am He." Our beloved Sri Radha said "Krishna—Krishna" and got lost in her Krishna and became Krishna's self, and from the pangs of separation started her tender cries of "Radha—Radha.' So profound was her sublimation! So profound her love! Bother you not about Sadhana's diverse ways. Think only of Sri Radha and work yourself into a profundity of love. There is nothing like love. Teach me love, O teach me love.

While saying this, the Crazy man broke into loud fits of sobbing. And Haladhar, too, followed suit. And the echoes of their cries rolled over the fields and knocked at the homes of men.

SNAP GOES THE BOW !

Crazy man : Rama, Rama, shoot the arrow and break the bow !

Harihar : O crazy follow, who is the unfortunate target of your arrow this fine morning ?

Crazy man : He is the target, assuredlʌ He.

Harihar : Where is your bow and where is your arrow ? You speak of airy things.

Crazy man : Within me you will find them all. Once the bow is broken, the rest will come easy.

Harihar : Do you hope to get Sita ? Rama Chandra snapped the bow and won Sita. What is on your mind please ? Indeed, if everything is within you Rama and Sita cannot be without.

Crazy man : It is Rama who tries his strength on the bow. I cannot rest until the bow is broken. Rama, Rama, shoot the arrow and break the bow.

Harihar : Who gave you the bow, p!ease ?

SNAP GOES THE BOW !

Crazy man : Siva gave it, and who else could give it ? Within me there is Rama, and Sita and Siva and the bow. The moment the bow is snapped, Mother will throw the garland round my Rama's neck. And then Mother will mingle with Rama, Rama with Siva and all will mingle into one. O what a thrill ! Jai Sitaram, Jai Sitaram !

Harihar : Pray, stop your dance. Nothing is there to make you dance. O, a curb for your craziness !

Crazy man : (Claps his hands and goes on dancing) Come you, come all, to see the wedding of Sita and Rama.

Harihar : You cannot get away that way. Tell me where is your Rama.

Crazy man : Why, Rama my Soul is within me.

Harihar : Where is your Siva ?

Crazy man : Siva is my Guru and He resides in my head.

Harihar : And where is the bow ?

Crazy man : Why, the bow is the sonorous "Om" which my Guru taught me.

PAGES FROM A CRAZY MAN'S LIFE.

Harihar : Where is your arrow ?

Crazy man : The Soul is there and that is my arrow.

Harihar : You said just now that the Soul is your Rama and again you say that the soul is your arrow !

Crazy man : Yes, my child, the Soul as Rama sends the shaft flying and the Soul as arrow touches the target.

Harihar : O, I forgot the main thing. Where is your Sita ?

Crazy man : Sita is there as Brahma-Vidya.

Harihar : How absurd you are !

Crazy man : I say only this ;

"Pranabo Dhanu Saro Hi Atma,
Brahma Tatlakshyam Uchchyatay"

The 'Om' is the bow and the soul is the arrow and the transeendental God-essence is the target.

Now you see, my child, it is all very complex philosophy. If you press deeper into it you are apt to be perplexed. The bow may act in the role of Rama. And again it may act as Sita. The bow, because it is the cosmic harmony, carries in its bowels all the Vedas and all the Puranas and all the fourteen worlds. And when all the manifest universe melts away, there remains nothing but the bow.

Harihar : What absurdities pour from your crazy head !

Crazy man : I am no solitary madcap. The Lord Siva reflected on all this and went crazy and gave up house and home and kept singing "Rama—Rama." He has ever since been dancing down the ages and singing, as he dances, "Rama—Rama, Jai Rama, Jai Rama."

Harihar : You dance again ! I have much else to ask you. How will your Rama and Sita be united when the bow is broken ? And what is your wedding-wreath ?

Crazy man : As soon as the bow breaks and the arrow hits the target, Sita will come forward with her wreath of Jivan-Mukti and slip it over Rama's head. Jivan Mukti, you know, is the conquest of life' shackles. O, the scene of their union !

Harihar : Where do you get the union ?

Crazy man : O, you can't see it ? O what luck ! Look round and see how the Mother is offering flowers at the altar of Rama. See how the Mother sings her carol in the guise of birds. See how the Mother holds aloft her lamp—the sun—before Rama. See how She bathes His feet with the sacred water of the Ganges. See how the Mother brings the sweet scented breeze to cool His body. So many things are happening and you cannot see them ?

Harihar : O, my blindness ! I see them not.

Crazy man : Hold my hand and dance and sing —"Sitaram Sitaram."

And so the two joined hands and danced in a wild revelry and their cries of "Sitaram Jai Sitaram" rang through the air. And heaven came down and hung low over them, and the invisible forms of Narada and others joined in the revelry.

MEDLEY OVER THE GOD-ESSENCE.

The Crazy man one fine morning was pouring out his strains of "Jai Jai Rama, Sitaram, Jai Jai Rama, Sitaram," when Niranjan looked in at the cottage and said "O crazy fellow, what is the use of singing "Rama Rama"? Better adopt the negative method of Absolutism."

Crazy man : You may make for your goal along the road of illusionist analysis. But I propose to reach the self-same goal singing "Rama—Rama" all the way.

Niranjan : But how can you reach Salvation without having recourse to Analysis ?

Crazy man : Yes, my friend, I can do without Analysis. The holy name of Rama is the Ultimum. And transcendental experience can be reached through "Rama—Rama."

Niranjan : Ha, ha, what do you say, man ?

Crazy man : You laugh ? Do you respect the Upanishads ?

Niranjan : Certainly. O, the Upanishads !

Crazy man : Then see what they say :

Rama Eba Param Brahma,
Rama Eba Parat Param
Rama Eba Param Tattwam
Sri Ramo Brahma Tarakam

(Sri Ramarahasyopanisad)

Rama is the ultimate God-essence, and Rama is the Ultimum of all ultimates ; Rama is the eventual thesis, and Sri Rama is the Supreme Saviour.

And again :

Dharmamargam Charitrena
Gnanamargam Cha Namatah

(Sri Rama Purbatapini)

So you see the Name can put you on the road to the God-essence.

Niranjan : Yes, but that is not from genuine Upanisad.

Crazy man : Because it does not tally with you ? Jai Rama, Sitaram.

MEDLEY OVER THE GOD-ESSENCE.

Niranjan : The Shastras say "Salvation comes through transcending the manifest world."

Crazy man : They should say that of course. But, then, who is eligible and who is not ? Your mind must settle down through prayers and your 'prana' must climb to the 7th chakra, before you can cultivate transcendentalism. But the common man is steeped in vulgar materialism and therefore it is outside his competence to talk about transcendentalism. You must first of all feel that the world is too hot a spot for you, and having felt that you must renounce it and put yourself at the feet of a competent Guru. Then you must go through an ardous course of study and assimilation and meditation before you can reach the ultimate Thesis. Is not that so ?

Niranjan : Yes, to be sure.

Crazy man : Do you feel that your brain is blazing ? You are after all a family man, and with a girdle of wife and children how can you say "I am the divine essence ?"

Niranjan : A family man, yes. But should that preclude me from cultivating Vidya ?

Crazy man : Don't take offence, please. What is Vidya ?

PAGES FROM A CRAZY MAN'S LIFE.

Niranjan : "I am not the vulgar ego, I am the conscious immutable soul." That notion is called Vidya.

Crazy man : O, if you are not the body but the soul, then you disown your home and your wife and children ?

Niranjan : I have not yet come to the mark. I need a lot of pratice.

Crazy man : What is the import of practice ?

Niranjan : It means that I must do it over and over again.

Crazy man : Within the limits of your home, my friend, all your practice must inevitably hinge around the thesis : "I am the physical ego."

Niranjan : I can't follow you.

Crazy man : You are surrounded in your home by your wife and children and friends and kinsmen, and the impact of your environs presses home on you the notion that you are nothing but the physical ego.

Niranjan : Then you mean to say that pursuit of transcendentalism produces nothing ?

MEDLEY OVER THE GOD-ESSENCE.

Crazy man : No, I don't. Small men with so big a thing may break the faith of innocent worshippers and raise an unwholesome flutter in their hearts

Niranjan : Forgive me, I don't denounce faith. It must be there.

Crazy man : Sprinklings of faith won't do. It must come like a flood and Salvation will follow of course.

Niranjan : Lord Sankaracharya said, "Salvation comes through transcendental knowledge."

Crazy man : Who is Sankaracharya ?

Niranjan : O God, you don't know him ? He was the incarnation of Siva.

Crazy man : But then my Mahabir, too, came down as an incarnation of Siva. He has ever been chanting "Rama—Rama," and he proclaims that the mighty spell of that name produces everything.

Niranjan : Ha, ha, nice words !

Crazy man ; A monkey's words and so you laugh them away. Do you know what Lord Siva Himself has said ? Well, here it is :

PAGES FROM A CRAZY MAN'S LIFE.

Aham Bhabannamo Grinan Kritartho
Basami Kasyam Sahito Bhabanya

.(I dwell in Kasi with my consort Bhabani and I chant your name all the time and feel sanctified.)

Now tell me, my friend, why I should not emulate Siva.

Niranjan : All that is from the puranas.

Crazy man : You can believe in history, and you say too that Sankaracharya was Siva incarnate. Then why should you not believe in Adhyatma Ramayana ? Your Sankaracharya has said exactly what my Sankar (Siva) said about God-essence. First qualify yourself for the pursuit. Otherwise the dry lore of the Shastras will weigh heavy on you and torment you. Said my Siva :

Adau Swabarnasrama Barnita Kriya
Kritwa Samasadita Suddha Manasa
Samapya Tatpurbam Upatta Sadhanam
Samasrayet Sadgurum Atmalabdhaye.

The import of the Sloka is that you must seek purification through a due performance of duties at home and then you can renounce the world and put yourself under a competent Guru, before you start upon your pursuit of the divine essence—The absolute God. So purify yourself through a course of devotional exercises.

Niranjan : You talk glibly of devotion. Can you quote from Shruti to support the point that devotion will carry one to the Ultimum ?

Crazy man : You must have read Chhandogya Upanisad. It tells you to chant the Gayatri and the "Om." And all that is within the orbit of devotion.

Niranjan : Which of the Upanisads distinctly proclaims that devotion leads to Tattwagnam—the Supreme Union ?

Crazy man : One can dance through devotion all the way to the blissful Union. God comes forward smiling and embraces the devotee. The Mahanarayan Upanisad says : "The path of devotion is rosy and safe. And it assuredly leads to Salvation—to the blissful Union. God protects in every way those who are devoted to Him. And without devotion there can be no experience of the God-essence. So the best thing is for you to cultivate devotion." Sitaram, Sitaram.

Niranjan : Then you mean to say that man may reach Salvation through devotion.

PAGES FROM A CRAZY MAN'S LIFE.

Crazy man : Not only I, but the Upanisads say that.

Niranjan : Then the family man need not read such Shastras as deal with Salvation ?

Crazy man : Yes, he may, if he chooses.

Niranjan : What does he gain that way ?

Crazy man : It will bring him to eminence and to plenty. And with a little more effort, he can have the perfect pose of King Janaka. Sitaram, Sitaram ! The Shastras are all there, but they should not be read unless they fit in with you. If a family man reads what is meant for a Sannyasi, it will have the effect of adding to his pride and not to his welfare.

Niranjan : Suppose someone has passed the Matriculation examination. Now if he has no idea of M. A how is he to plan his future ?

Crazy man : Yes, he ought to know that ahead of him there is M. A , but he won't profit by reading books fit for M A. students. Let your initiation (Diksha) be your Matriculation. Then the Intermediate course for you is to work for the satisfaction of the Lord, and to cultivate the nine kinds of devotion.

MEDLEY OVER THE GOD-ESSENCE.

When your devotion becomes deep-rooted and inflexible, you get through your Intermediate examination. Then begins your B. A. course. You worship the universal presence of God and you contemplate that He pervades all the 14 worlds and all the spaces. And you soon perceive, even with your external senses, that your Ista blooms out of every grove and every speck of life. All the flowers and all the fruits and all the songs of the birds throb with divine animation. The vernal breeze blows over you and you feel that it is instinct with your Ista. Out of the smiling moon blooms out His smiling face. You gaze upon the blue sea and see Him there and feel like leaping into the sea. O, let me sing.

I have seen a Saint glowing like gold
I have seen him come this way.
He sings of Hari and weeps as he sings
And others weep with him.
He sheds his lustre wherever he goes
And he says "Where is my Shyam ?"
He looks at the cloud
And he says aloud
"I see you not, but I hear your fluie."
Down he goes and he rolls in the dust
He cries for Krishna, but he finds Him not.

PAGES FROM A CRAZY MAN'S LIFE.

The Crazy man sang his song three times over, and said, "Such are those who adore Sri Hari and that way they rise above the world."

Niranjan: How lovely are the strains of your song!

Crazy man: As you learn to see him in the sights around you, you break the shackles of the world, and that way you graduate. Then comes your Sannyas and you are an M. A. student. You hear from your Guru dissertations about "I am the Soul." And you assimilate your lessons and sink into meditation until you are firmly convinced that you are everything. When that conviction comes, you get your M. A. degree. And then for your P. R. S. you have to climb higher and lose yourself in the absolute Brahma.

These are the words of a seer and not of a Crazy man You have to climb step by step, not by a single hop. With the trammels of the world tight around you, it will be an empty cant for you to say that you are Brahma, the divine essence. Ply your tongue and say "Rama—Rama" until your shackles loosen.

Niranjan: Yes, but if the absolute Soul is not understood why should I run after it? I should know what I am now and what I am eventually to be.

MEDLEY OVER THE GOD-ESSENCE.

Crazy man : Why, the Guru sums it all up at the initiation. He tells you how Kundalini will rise and melt in the bosom of Siva. And through Sadhana you shall have a direct experience of all that.

Niranjan : Can I develop an aversion to the world without entering into the illusionist analysis ?

Crazy man : What then did you gather from my words ? A mere intellectual effort within the orbit of the family is no cultivation of illusionism. Your aversion has to evolve through a self-less performance of religious duties.

Niranjan : But after all, Analysis lifts the mind, and I for one can say, after ten years of analysis, that I feel that I am the Absolute Soul, changeless and joyous and free.

Crazy man : Very well, let me see. (He lights a match and holds it close to Niranjan's garment.)

Niranjan : O, what a joke ! It may catch fire.

Crazy man : Why run away, man ? How can you the absolute soul be affected by a mere blaze of a match ? This bit of fire seems to have jolted you out of your lofty self assurance. So I say that dry intellection will carry you nowhere. What you need is an effusion of feelings. An intellectual effort may carry your mind up but cannot keep it there. Down it comes, after a while, to the sordid dust. Before you enter upon Rajayoga, you must have an experience of Mahabhaba—the ecstasy sublime.

Niranjan : I don't bother about eligibility. One may pursue whatever one likes.

Crazy man : Yes the patient may clamour for absurd things, and I may run after my neighbour's wife. Are we to get them ?

Niranjan : Of course, not.

Crazy man : Now-a-days books on Tattwa are going galore and selling very cheap. And so they are read by even the school-boys and the innocent mothers. This craze for Tattwa (Absolutism) is only a recent growth. Before this craze appeared there were docile children and devoted wives and peaceful homes. Now we find arrogant pandits, full of sublime phrases but void of all scruples. I personally know of a Brahmin widow who lives by selling cow's milk and burns up her sins at the white flame of Tattwa. O, the fate of transcendental knowledge !

Everybody here seems to run after the absolute Soul. It may mean an accumulation of learning but the heart blazes as ever. I met recently a scholar who writes books and gives lectures. He said, "I make speeches and I am applauded as a great Vedantist. But my heart groans within. I will surrender myself to whoever shows me the way to peace."

O, what a learning he wields! But for all his learning he writhes in agony.

Niranjan; But there ARE family men who pursue the absolute soul unaffected by worldly affairs.

Crazy man: Yes, but they are very rare. They come as family men to preach the ideals of life. And they too insist that the weak should take to devotion. Jai Rama, Sitaram.

Niranjan: Suppose I seek Salvation. And my Sannyas is put off for want of a Competent Guru. Should that preclude me from Seeking the Absolute?

Crazy man: Ay, but first make sure whether you are a genuine seeker. Are you past feeling pleasure and pain?

Niranjan: No, not yet.

Crazy man: Do you sense the presence of your god in everything you see?

Niranjan : No.

Crazy man : Then you have yet to get through your first course. You have yet to reach mental refinement. Take the road shown by your Guru.

Niranjan : Why, the Guru may show this way or that. Am I to follow him blindly ?

Crazy man : Lord Siva has prescribed Tantra for the age of Kali, and in the Shape of Guru he comes and gives us Diksha. Have you been initiated ?

Niranjan : Yes, why not ?

Crazy man : Suppose your Guru tells you to chant "Rama Rama" and to read Ramagita, Rama Kavacha and Ramastotra, so that your faith in your God may deepen. And he may ask you to contemplate His Leela, and to go through Purascharan (a Specific ritual) for the consummation of your mantra. When your mantra reaches that consummation, you are to get your Ista—the god of your seeking. And you shall have a personal experience of the Relative and the Absolute. And you shall finally merge in the Lord and be the Lord of your seeking.

You may chant "Rama-Rama" in obedience to your Guru and you may chant for a month or two and possibly feel the better for the chanting. But before you get a settled faith in your Ista, you may think that all gods are equal and you can well enter now upon a pursuit of the Absolute. And so thinking you may run after the Vedanta and the Upanisads and all that. But after all this where do you stand ? You remain where you were at the start. Your woes persist and your heart blazes.

Niranjan : But Tattwa is dealt with in Ramagita.

Crazy man : Yes, but Ramagita recommends its pursuit when your mind has been purged First you have to see that your faith deepens ; you have to go through selfless services to God and through Purascharan for the consummation of your mantra. If you avoid that course and merely say "I am not the physical ego, but the absolute soul," it will carry you nowhere. Cultivate your faith. You cannot have it for the asking. And without faith you cannot make for the divine essence.

Niranjan : When all the gods are the Same essence, why on earth should I contemplate the doings (Leela) of Rama and read Ramagita ?

Crazy man : The system of worshipping the Same Essence in five different images is in accordance with the presence of five elements. One or other of the elements may preponderate in you, and you are to worship the god that presides over that element.

Akasasya Adhipo Vishnu
Agneschapi Maheswari
Bayo Surjo Kshiteriso Jibanasya Ganadhipa.

(Mantrayoga Samhita.)

Vishnu presides over space, Kalee over fire, the Sun over the wind, Siva over the earth and Ganapati over water.

The mantra given by your Guru must melt away before you rise above the elements. The mantra, at the melting point, will give you a new mantra for the worship of Brahma. You will realise then that all the gods are one,

Niranjan : How can the mantra melt away ?

Crazy man : When it melts, you are past articulating it, and your heart is full.

Niranjan : Is that not absurd ?

Crazy man : Believe me, your Sandhya and your Gayatri and your Vedas will all fulfil themselves and melt away.

MEDLEY OVER THE GOD-ESSENCE.

Niranjan : Why persist in being absurd ? There is a power in my tongue and you feel it when I speak. How can my mantras pass, while the tongue is in action?

Crazy man : Indeed, how absurd I am ! I am but a chip of the old block—that absurd Father of mine, who waxes wild as He sings "Rama – Rama," and dances wildly as He sings. And my Mother is such that She dances naked on my Father's spacious chest. O, what a dance on such a chest ! O, the myriads of worlds that bloom out of Her every moment ! O my Mother, joyous and free !

The crazy man, as he spoke, was overwhelmed by a flood of tears. And his friend, with the impact of that flood full upon him, stood rooted to the spot, silent and spell-bound.

A TALK ABOUT THE SOUL.

The crazy man went through his evening ritual at the edge of the Ganges and sang "Rama-Krishna, Rama-Krishna" and his smiles changed to tears and tears to smiles. And at last his melody faded into the deep silence of his soul. A voice brought him back to the external world and it was the voice of a young Brahmin. Said the Brahmin, "I was looking about for you, Sir."

The Crazy man said, "For me ? Why on earth for me ?"

Brahmin : I heard you the other day and thought over what you said. I should like to ask you something to-day.

Crazy man : What is your something, my child ?

Brahmin : You see I have not read the Shastras, nor have I cultivated the Sadhus. I have been brought up in the modern ways of scientific thinking. Is there a soul, Sir ? And if there is, how do I gain by knowing that ?

Crazy man : O my child, you are clamouring for ten pounds of milk while your pot can only contain one. The soul is a difficult proposition and it seems to be beyond my tether. Besides, you don't respect the Shastras and the Sadhus.

Brahmin: I have come with an open mind. Won't you please explain why the soul must be accepted as a basic postulate?

Crazy man: Do you accept both matter and conscious energy?

Brahmin: Why conscious energy? Matter is everything.

Crazy man: If everything is matter, how do you move and breathe? Wherefrom comes all your animation?

Brahmin: Animation starts spontaneously in chemical combinations of matter. The soul is out of the picture. Lime and turmeric produce a red compound. Likewise, flesh and blood and bones produce life. Why speak of soul?

Crazy man: If that be so, then living beings ought to live on as the red compound does. And why, again, should the living beings be so differently alive? Why should one man be poor while another is rich? If blood and flesh and all that have produced life, why should it expire so differently ? Why is it that one dies young and another full of years ?

Brahmin : Yes, but the same proportion is not found in all the compounds.

Crazy man : You may explain it that way. But why should the proportion vary from man to man ? Again, you may touch a dead body but it won't offer to stir. Is matter absent ? By the way, your analogy is not sound. In producing a compound the constituents are transformed. Your red compound is neither turmeric nor lime. But flesh and blood and all that are distinctly present in the living organism.

Brahmin : O, for heaven's sake, don't please try to outwit me that way.

Crazy man : Very well. If, as you say, life means a compound of flesh and so on, you can put th m together and create a living compound. Can you ?

Brahmin : Our material science has yet to achieve that. A time may come when it will. Why should I accept the Soul merely because I can't give life now ?

Crazy man : I cannot wait till your science succeeds. To me the Soul is a self-evident truth.

A TALK ABOUT THE SOUL.

When you speak of your house, you know that you are distinct from your house. Don't you ?

Brahmin : Yes, that is clear enough.

Crazy man : You speak of your body, your hands and your eyes. You then are the owner of all these things, just as you are the owner of your house. And being the owner of them all, you are clearly distinct from them all. And that distinct entity is the Soul.

Brahmin : All that is clever logic, but it is evasive.

Crazy man : O, you speak of evasion when you refuse to be convinced. Know you that your senses sink when you sleep ? Slumber comes but it does not steal away matter. How then, if you are a mere mass of matter, do you behave one way while awake, and another while asleep ? And who takes you from wakefulness to dream and from dream to absolute sleep ? Tell me, O tell me who.

Brahmin : That is nature's way. And what we dream is nothing but what we think while awake.

Crazy man : It is quite probable that you dream of such things as you have never seen or never thought of. And moreover you sometimes dream and sometimes don't. Is that nature's way? What indeed is nature?

Brahmin : Nature is the manifest world.

Crazy man : That's all right. Nature is created for someone and that someone is the Soul.

Brahmin : Created for some one? Why, nature itself is everything.

Crazy man : Believe me, nature is the pleasure-ground of the Soul. If you see a bed, you infer that it is prepared for somebody's comfort. So must you look at the world and infer that it is created for some body.

Brahmin : Are you then speaking from your knowledge of the Shastras?

Crazy man : Of course, I am. How can I go against them?

Brahmin : To be frank, I cannot follow you.

Crazy man : Here is the holy Ganges flowing before you, and you the Soul gaze upon it with your eyes. There is a murmur in its tide and you the Soul lean your ears to hear the murmur. When you are among the flowers, you the Soul drink in their fragrance with your nose.

Brahmin : All this is fine poetry but not convincing. Is Soul a concrete object ?

Crazy man : What is a concrete object ?

Brahmin : Whatever is visible to the eye is a concrete object. No sensible man would care to accept what he cannot see.

Crazy man : But the blind man sees not what others see. And you must boast not that you have eyes to see.

Brahmin : Boast not ? Ay, what a joke !

Crazy man : Boast you must ? Where are your eyes ? Do you see them ?

Brahmin : See my eyes ? Ay, how can I ?

Crazy man : You say you don't accept what you cannot see. Perforce then you are blind. And your grandparents never existed since you saw them not. And your wife and children don't exist now, be cause you don't see them now.

PAGES FROM A CRAZY MAN'S LIFE.

Brahmin : Why, if I look in a mirror, I can see my eyes. And my grandparents did exist because I exist. This is simple inference. And when I go home I shall see my wife and children.

Crazy man : So then you don't rule out inference. If you hold the mirror of an untainted mind up to your Soul you shall see your Soul. The fact that you exist presupposes that your grandparents did also exist. You see that the body exists, and if it is a chariot, the senses are horses, the mind is the bridle and intelligence is the charioteer. That all of them exist presupposes that there is a Soul who rides the chariot. You say you come home to meet your wife and children. So must you come home to meet your Soul.

Brahmin : Your words are unanswerable. But still I cannot size up the Soul.

Crazy man : O, the words I spent on you ! O the blindness that screens you from the Soul ! I asked a blind man to see how the sun was shining. But the blind man saw it not. The soul is like the sun, blazing bright as ever, and yet I must fail to show you that it is there. Wait, my child, wait till you are born a man.

Brahmin : Am I not a man at this birth ?

A TALK ABOUT THE SOUL.

Crazy man: Eating and sleeping and mating are all that you practise. And the beast, too, does the same. Where then do you differ from the beast ?

Brahmin: All men are then beasts of course ?

Crazy man: Never, my child. Those who are pious are above the beasts. And those who are twice-born are also above them.

Brahmin: I am twice-born, to be sure. Why must I pass for a beast ?

Crazy man: Twice-born, yes. But you have yet to purify yourself through prayer and ritual. Before you have done all that you are not substantially twice-born. You don't believe in the Vedanta. Nor do you long for a Guru. And all the time heresy haunts your mind. And those who are such must inevitably go to the wall.

Brahmin: Go to the wall ? Can I not avert such a fate ? I admit I have not so far observed the prescribed rules of conduct. I have not said my prayers, nor offered flowers at the altar. Save me, Sir, save me from damnation.

PAGES FROM A CRAZY MAN'S LIFE.

Crazy man : Fear not, my child. Take the holy name of God. See what the Skandapurana says :

Tat Nasti Karmajam Loke
Bagjam Manasam Eba Ba
Jat Na Kshapayate Papam
Kalau Govinda Kirtanam.

One may be sinning all the way in thought and speech and action, and yet the whole junkpile of sin will be liquidated by singing of Lord Govinda. And here comes Brahmanda purana to your aid :

Mahapataka Juktopi Kirtayan Nisam Harim
Suddhantakarno Bhutwa Jayate Pamti pabana

The worst sinners become purified by singing night and day of Sri Hari and others too are purified by them. Believe, my child, believe in the holy puranas.

Brahmin : The name of Hari will save me ?

Crazy man : The Namernever betrays. It saved Ratnakar (Valmiki) and Ajamil and a host of others. Hold on to the Name and it shall save you.

Brahmin : I am innocent of everything. Tell me, Sir, tell me, please, how I am to conduct myself.

Crazy man : Get up at four every morning and take your bath and all that. And then contemplate your Guru as residing in your head. Observe your morning Sandhya between 24 minutes before sunrise and 24 minutes after sunrise. Tell your Gayatri in earnest read the Gita and worship Siva and Vishnu. When you are not doing all this, do the singing. Sing of Sri Hari and He is bound to smile upon you. Peace you seek ? Sing of Him and you shall have peace. Hold fast to Sri Hari's name. There is no other way out of darkness in this the age of Kali.

Saying this, the crazy man danced and sang :

Hare Rama Hare Rama,
Rama Rama Hare Hare
Hare Krishna Hare Krishna,
Krishna Krishna Hare Hare.

And the cadences of his deep music rolled over the ripples of the Ganges and mingled with the murmur of the tide.

THE HUMAN SKULL SPEAKS.

The crazy man was one day strolling along the bank of the Ganges and he found a human skull lying there. As he approached the skull, it started grinning. His nerves were strong enough and he coolly asked, "Why do you laugh, O Skull ?" The Skull said, 'O living thing, when do you laugh ?"

Crazy man : We laugh when we are amused. But why should you ?

Skull ; I felt amused by your attachment to your cottage and so I started laughing.

Crazy man : Not so much of attachment. Only there must be a roof to put my head under so long as I live.

Skull : How long do you expect to live ?

Crazy man : That I don't know.

Skull : Then a cottage is no use. Take your seat here on the bank and chant "Rama-Rama." Let not your attachments grow upon you, especially when you are on the road of renunciation. Whenever you say "This is mine," it means that you must suffer for saying that. Nothing abides, my friend All you possess is a hoax. Look at me and judge for yourself. I was one of the luckiest and happiest of men. And I was not denied the pleasures and comforts of life. Tens of hundreds of men were at my beck and call, and my might shook the land. I rolled in wealth and wallowed in luxury. And I thought not for a moment that death would come and take me away. Time passed and decay assailed my frame and I went the way of all flesh. In crossing the world I had to leave my possessions where they were. And here I have been lying for years, shorn of all my wealth, of all my pride, of all my flesh and blood. How many floods I have seen sweeping over me, how many thunderstorms have assailed me! Here I lie brooding over my past and I laugh as I brood. And to those who pass by me I say, "O folks, you shall all come to my fate sooner or later. Think of your end and lean to God." But very few care to notice me. If I am noticed at all, the comment is full of contempt. Some people do stop to look at me, and they start thinking of the fleeting show that the world is. But soon they leave me behind and return to their worldly interests. My cry is the same, however, now as before: The world is all a phantom show.

PAGES FROM A CRAZY MAN'S LIFE.

Crazy man : Serve you, my friend, somebody's will, lying here for years upon years ?

Skull ; Yes, I serve, as I lie, the will of my Lord. Unto people I say "Think not of your gold ; think more of your Lord."

Crazy man : But you said just now that you are heeded not.

Skull : Yes, but some do come and talk with me.

Crazy man : Well, my friend, do you insist that there can be no true God-seeking without detachment ? Is not practice sufficient ?

Skull : No, friend, no. Practice and detachment must go together, as my Lord said in the Gita. Detachment like a buttress will support your practice, and practice without that buttress will break down before you reach fulfilment.

Crazy man : How then can I seek God ?

Skull : If you seek God, think always of death. And that will be immensely helpful to you. This mortal body of yours and things hinging around that body are your chief obstruction. Now if you are full of contempt for your perishable frame, what obstruction remains? But the trouble is that it is not easy for you to forget your body. You may sing of God and climb to an exaltation where you forget your physical ego. But soon you climb down and recover your ego with all its cravings and desires. And this is the hour when you need lessons on detachment. Once the lessons come home, you will veer round to "Rama-Rama" and feel the divine touch.

Crazy man: The divine touch, O my friend, comes like a flash and is gone. May I not mingle eternally with the divine?

Skull: Exert yourself until you mingle so.

Crazy man: What way?

Skull: Continuous chanting makes you feell the gladdening touch. And the more you chant, the more you feel it. Let there be no break in your chanting, so that there may be no break in your gladness.

Crazy man: But sometimes I may chant long and yet find not the gladness coming.

Skull: That is when you should chant out loud, as the sages say. The Lord hears your call and comes back from receding and you feel the divine embrace. Go on chanting, my friend, and He shall not stay away from you. Let your "Rama-Rama" swell into solemn music, and lose yourself in your song. That is the road to transcendental knowledge. Keep on chanting and make your foundation strong enough. Otherwise you cannot build your superstructure of transcendental knowledge. Let the days and the weeks roll over you as you chant "Rama-Rama." Let all your limbs calm down into a settled and inflexible posture, and once you become inflexible you master the wind of life. And then the beloved Lord will come smiling and will greet you. The Name of the Lord is more important to you at this stage than the Lord Himself. Put that Name on your tongue and roll it there and your tongue shall be sanctified.

Crazy man: Suppose, my friend, the Name is on my tongue while my mind is elsewhere. Will that bring His smiles upon me? My mind may recede in spite of myself and make my prayers lip-deep only. Does that amount to hypocrisy?

Skull: No, my friend, hypocrisy is something else. If you pose as a Sadhu to cheat others, you are of course a hypocrite. You are not posing like that. You are only trying to conquer your mind.

THE HUMAN SKULL SPEAKS.

There may be failures and lapses, but your endeavour goes on. While you are a milgrip on the road, your mind may be playing odd tricks most of the time. But a time will come when the mind has been mastered. You are then safe at the summit. Before you reach it, you may have to strive hard and fail often. God sees your strivings and loves you. Suppose I am Govinda, and you are calling after me, "Govinda, Govinda" though your mind is absent. Shall I not respond to you? I will of course come up to you, and say "O see, my friend, I have come." So comes the merciful Lord in answer to your call.

Crazy man : O, how merciful !

Skull : What bounds can you ser to His mercy ?

Valmiki only chanted "Mara, Mara" and the Lord blessed him. Ajamil only uttered "Narayan" by way of crlling his son, and he was saved. Your prayers may be dry but they will reach Him all the same.

Pramadat Api Sanspristo Jathanalakano
Dahet
Tatha Osthaputa Sanspristo Harinama
Dahat Agham.
Brahma purana.

The flame will burn you even if you touch it in jest. So the name of Sri Hari, merely utterep, will burn uq your sins.

PAGES FROM A CRAZY MAN'S LIFE.

Here then is a message of hope to all sinners, big and small. The Name is such a spell that it pulls the wandering mind and fixes it on God. Let the sinner put that Name on his tongue and let him say "I am a sinner, O Lord but I beseech Your protection, for You are merciful" And the Lord will smile and grant his prayer. He raises the fallen and blesses even the worst offenders.

Crazy man: O, how sweet is your speech! It lifts up the failing spirits and gives them a new hope. I feel I am in excellent company, and I would like to hear you night and day.

Skull: The sages say that communion with God is Sadhana par excellence. If you commune with God you can overcome your degrading thoughts. And so you not only rise above the world but also get all the pleasure out of an intimate converse.

Crazy man: O, the pleasure of hearing you speak!

Skull: Man may run after bliss but he shall not find it unless he sees God everywhere.

Crazy man: Well, my friend, do all people think there is God? Do all races pray to Him?

Skull : Definitely, but His names are many. What do we find within Hinduism ? The Vedantist calls Him Brahma, the Yogi calls Him the Absolute Soul, the devotee says He is the Lord of immense treasures. The Shaiva calls Him Siva, the Soura calls Him the Sun and the Vaisnava says He is Vishnu. And so the name of God varies from cult to cult and from sect to sect, within Hindudom. And then the English call Him God, the Muslims call Him Allah, the Greeks know Him as Jupiter. And there are savage tribes all over the world, and His name differs from tribe to tribe. He is One, but His names are numerous. And all the names refer to the One All-pervasive Being.

Out of the One sprang the cosmos
Into the One melt it must.
Or think of the cosmos as a phantom show
The passive radiance changes not.

Crazy man : Stop not, my friend, stop not your strains.

Skull : Be lost in Me, crazy man
Be lost, for all is Me,
The skull is silent, dead and voiceless
And all the words are Mine.

PAGES FROM A CRAZY MAN'S LIFE.

Crazy man : Good heavens ! Yours the voice, my Lord ?
Hold you forth, then, and make me wild.

Skull : Think, as you walk, you are a wave
On the sea of the soul-boundless and deep.
Think, as you rest, you are a gem
In the string of jewels that knowledge is.
Think, as you see the treasures around,
The soul is shining clear and bright.
Think, as you lie, you are sunk in bliss
And thinking, make your bliss profound.
Thus roll your days and thus your years
Thus living, make your life sublime,
Chant My name without a break,
Lying or walking, no matter where.

Crazy man : O, how celestial are the strains You pour ! Glory be to you Sitaram ! Sitaram !

THE DOGS COME BARKING.

I was coming from Chandigacha yesterday and some dogs from the Santhal quarters came barking after me. They seemed to be on the point of falling upon me, but I walked steadily on, and muttered "Rama, Rama" as I walked. Every moment I thought they would fall upon me, but at the same time I remembered that in the guise of the dogs You were coming. This remembrance came like a flash and vanished and came again. Indeed I alternated between this and an overpowering fright. Thus swinging between fright and hope, I trudged on without looking back. For a while the dogs kept barking after me, but then they went away.

You came, my Lord, in the guise of the dogs and taught me a good lesson. It dawned on me that if I remember you, even without a deep-rooted faith in you, I can overcome adversity. And if that faith is present, so much the better.

This world of ours is full of sorrows and afflictions. Abundance smiles here and poverty languishes there. Approbation exists here side by side with disapprobation. All these come barking after us; but if we march on with "Rama—Rama" on our lips, they may keep barking for a time but in the end they will sink into silence.

Disease and death and proverty and sorrow exist alongside wealth and peace and plenty. But if we are convinced that all these are You, then we shall not be thrown off our balance Until that conviction becomes deep-rooted, we are bound to be tossed about But this much is evident that even in the absence of that conviction we can earn Your blessings if simply we chant "Rama—Rama." And that way can we get rid of the dogs that come barking.

The world barks because it must. In weal or woe, in prosperity or adversity, the bark is heard, but we must heed it not. We must keep Your name on our tongues and remember that everything is within You. If we can do that, all our troubles will subside.

You come before me, my Lord, in varied forms, with words of hope, and yet I continue to be restless. In the midst of my daily duties, religious or otherwise, I feel upset when I miss You. But the next moment I re-call that you are everything. You are in my gladness as You are in my sullenness. And as I re-call that lofty truth, all my blues fade away. When I read holy books, I feel cheered by the thought that you are listening to me. When I forget you amid my reading, no joy wells up in my heart, and I regret that I forgot you. But then again it comes to my mind that all this forgetfullness is You and nothing exists outside You. And so my mind calms down.

Time passes and the conviction grows upon me that I cannot win You through Sadhana. I may dig long for gold and find none. I am a hopeless straggler, unfit for Yoga and Meditation. I wonder where to find my prop. And I wonder where I shall have solace. Who will care to listen to me ? I have heard voices about me, but they were full of frightfulness and full of indictment. So now I turn to you, my Lord. Allow me to know you. Allow me to converse with You. I feel like talking and if talk I must, let me talk with You. Come, my Lord, come out of the shell of your reserve and talk with me. Or must I infer that You have felt hurt ? I know I don't obey You. Is that why You look displeased ? I take the vow, then, that I will obey you. Tell me, O, what I am to do. Shall I be regular with my Sandhya and my prayers ? Shall I follow the Shastras ? Shall I serve You ? Yes, I will do them all. Pledges like this I have given before, but I have only honoured them in the breach.

I have been born and re born and I have tasted life's bitter potion. I have fought with the forces of darkness, and to-day I find myself battered and bleeding. I beseech Your shelter and Your mercy, O Lord. Must You turn me away? Where shall I turn away, my Lord? Above me and below me, before me and behind me I feel the pulsation of your divine presence. And so, turning away from You, I turn but to You. Wherever I turn I see nothing but You. You are the earth and the sky, You are the wind and the fire. You are the ear and the eye. You are the tongue and the speech. You are the mind and the brain. You are the heart and the ego. You are everything. The chirping cricket is you, and all my thoughts and all my words are You. Whatever was, was You. Whatever is, is You. Whatever comes after will be You. You cannot but hear what I say. I don't know what is good for me and what is not. But I am sure You are doing only what is good. I do, however, forget that at times, and feel confounded by the way You behave That is when I lean more to my ego than to You. Draw me, Lord, draw me to Yourself, fail me not.

Come, my Lord, come closer to me, for I wish to hear you speak.

O gracious! who calls whom? You call me? But that is not my name! Know You not what my name is?

THE DOGS COME BARKING.

Oh, I am sorry. What I know as my own name is really the name of this body of mine—this odious mixture of the elements. Is that not the reason why you are calling me by my real name ? Keep on calling my Lord, for out of this sordid world I go, as I hear You call. I am no more my old self as I hear that name from Your lips. And vague snatches of far-away thoughts flash within. Hold not Your tongue, my Lord. Let me add my voice to Yours.

Rama Rama Rama Rama
Rama Rama Hare Hare
Rama Krishna Rama Krishna
Rama Krishna Hare Hare.

Ah, how sweet is Your warbling ! Be it ever so silent, it sends a thrill down my frame. Stop not Your notes, my Lord. Let me hear them and sink into slumber. O, the gladness !

Rama Krishna Rama Krishna
Rama Krishna Hare Hare.

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